

Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 26, 2022

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 via Zoom 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.
by Board Chairman Maurice Baynard

Board members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Donna Holmes- Lockett
Joseph Foster
Renee Whitby
Larry Bell
C. Wade Mosely
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Monique Braxton

Board members absent:

Marirose Roach
Lakiesha Creighton
Charis Jackson

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Ericka Washington	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Michelle Thornton,	CFO
Deleah Archer	Assistant Principal of Specialized Services
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Libation (Mama Renee Whitby)

Board member and Cultural Leader Renee Whitby lead members with libation.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

There were no visitors

Roll Call

Board member and Chairman Maurice Baynard asked Board members and the senior leadership team to give introductions. Board members and the senior leadership team introduced themselves, stated their names and titles.

Review of the Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)

Board Member Maurice announced for the record that last months (November) meeting minutes were not approved and it will be noted that the November Board meeting minutes will be reviewed and certified by Board vote in January. He asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the December meeting minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Larry made a motion to accept the December minutes as presented, seconded by board member Monique. All were in favor, none were opposed, and there was a unanimous motion to accept.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

Dr. Baynard turned the meeting to over to Greg for leadership reports.

Greg stated that he wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Board of directors and the senior leadership team for doing such a great job of managing and navigating all the turbulent times.

In person instruction

Greg reported that they decided as an organization to pause for the first 18 days in January of in school and in person instruction from January 3rd to Jan 18th. This was to give both students and staff some time given the spike with the Omicron variant. He indicated that their aim was to provide time for students and staff to go through the infection cycle should they have gathered over the holiday recess. He reported that they brought everyone back into the building on January 18th. He noted that they COVID tested everyone and then resumed in person instruction on Wednesday January 19th.

Greg reported that tomorrow marks a milestone date for Harambee. The School District of Philadelphia will approve the new five-year term for Harambee. It will appear on the agenda as action item number 24 for the approval of the official five-year term for Harambee. Greg noted that they have a significant amount of work ahead. He indicated that they have created a Charter Renewal framework document that will chart their course over the next five-year term. The document will help them to satisfy their conditions for renewal on an ongoing basis so that they will always be prepared.

Property Acquisition

Greg reported that they are still actively looking for property acquisition. They are currently looking at the old Shop Rite at 6710 Haverford Avenue. The property has 17,000 square feet available where they could create seven classrooms, four offices, a multipurpose room and also the opportunity to create an early learning center for K-1 and 2. It is currently under investigation while they continue to look at properties for the best fit for Harambee.

Curriculum and Instruction, Sara Ferguson

Greg reported on behalf of Sara.

Teacher Observations

He reported that they are currently in the process of formal teacher observations using the Danielson framework. He indicated that they will begin the second semester of unannounced formal observations at the end of January and in the first week in February.

He also reported that they are in the third marking period and that any student in danger of failing will receive a student success plan. He explained that the plan is a contract with the student and their parents to ensure that Harambee provides the necessary intervention and support, to give students every opportunity to be successful instructionally. This is provided so that students will not be retained in their grade at the conclusion of the school year. Greg opened the floor for questions. Board member Renee asked if all staff positions at the teaching level have been filled. Greg responded yes all teaching positions have been filled.

She also asked if the teacher of record is the person who is responsible for providing help with the student success plan/contract. Greg explained that they look at the individual plan to determine where the student is struggling and then they design a tailored instruction plan to meet that student's individual need. He also said that many of the interventions occur through the operational process of the MTSS program. Dr. Baynard asked if Sara could provide a quantitative demonstration at the February Board meeting indicating where the students were in September and the progress that they have made or lack thereof between September and December so that they have some sense of the impact the pandemic had on students. This would allow everyone to know where Harambee is as a school and by grade, along with providing a sense of the work to come.

Greg responded that yes it could be done and that they would look at the data by grade level. He asked if it would be possible to provide it in March instead of February because they have their second assessment for the week of Monday February 14

th for ELA and Monday February 21st for math. He indicated that they would have a much better data snapshot in March after the students have sat for two formative assessments. Dr. Baynard agreed that the demonstration could be provided at whatever time would make it easier for them to provide it. He also asked if information on the HASA program could be provided at that time as well. Greg indicated that he would ask Leah to provide a presentation on the HASA program at the February Board meeting.

Board member Wade asked if the new charter would be retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year or does it start once the school board approves it? Greg asked Ericka to answer the question. She responded that the renewal should be effective July 1.

School Operations, Ericka Washington

Greg turned the meeting over to Ericka for the Operations report.

ICS Facilities Master Plan

Ericka reported that they have been working with the contractor ICS and are entering into a professional services agreement with them using the ESSER funding to conduct capital improvements in the building. They are primarily looking to work on the roof of the building, the façade and the HVAC system. They will use ICS to bid on contracts to have the work done.

Facilities

Ericka also reported that they have a new contractor that has been on site since December 13th working on their custodial services. They were in the building over the winter conducting a winter refresh of the building. Ericka noted that they are happy with the services that they have been receiving thus far, but are still looking for a maintenance person to work directly for Harambee to perform general repairs in the building.

Enrollment/Student Lottery

Ericka reported that they conducted their school lottery last week on January 20th. She indicated that the process was new to Harambee as this was their first year using a digitized lottery system. They conducted a random draw and were able to fill 92 seats out of 135 projected seats. She stated that this year the process looks different for families since eliminating the paper and pencil process, although they still provide it as an option for those families that still want to complete an application to mail in or email. She indicated that they are encouraging everyone to go onto the website to complete the application electronically. Once the application is completed it will generate a report that will be merged into their student information system. She noted that they are pleased with the efficiency that the new system provides for Harambee around school enrollment.

Food Services

Ericka reported that during the two-week period that they were out on virtual instruction they completed a waiver with the state that allowed them to serve food in the event that they had another emergency like they did last year. She informed members that while they were out of the building their families could still be fed. She reported that they had two distribution days where 100 families received bundles for breakfast and lunch for the entire week. She also noted that they completed a waiver that not only allowed them to feed Harambee students, but also extended to any child under the age of 18 in the household.

Specialized Services, Dr. Archer

Greg turned the meeting over to Deleah for the Specialized Services report.

Special Education Program

Deleah reported that they have many things going on in the Specialized Services department with teachers, programming and counseling. She provided a comprehensive up date on the number of new teachers that have currently been hired in the Special Education department. She stated that one teacher just started in January, another will begin next week and two more have been there since the fall. She indicated that they have been broken into grade levels.

New programming

Deleah gave an overview of all of the new programming that includes a Gifted Education class entitled Challenge, a Full-time Special Education class entitled Specialized Learning Support which supports grades one, two and three and it is their full time placement for their low incident categories of disability.

New classes

She also expounded on the new classes that they have added to their roster that began in the third marking period. They are called Learning Support English Language Arts and Learning Support Math. The purpose is to provide small group instruction for students that have IEP's. These courses will replace their regular English Language Arts and their regular Math. She stated that the classes are held on the second floor and take place in the morning. In her overview she also reported that they hold small group instruction for their Instructional Support Lab (ISL) for grades K-8 and at this time students can meet with their Case Managers to work on their independent goals

Gifted Program

Deleah reported that they now have a Gifted Support Services Program actively taking place at Harambee and that it is being handled by teacher Brittany Longshore. She opened the floor for questions from her report. Board member Renee commented that she is very impressed with the excellent report provided by

Dr. Deleah Archer. Board member Wade also commented that Deleah provided a very comprehensive report. He asked what is the overall total population of Gifted and Special Education students. She stated that the current number of gifted students is four, they had five but one student moved. Currently there are two six graders, one-third grader and one-fourth grader.

She indicated that the total population of Special Education students is now confirmed at seventy six with five to seven currently in the in the pipeline. She also noted that she would be sending out a letter to parents introducing herself and informing them of all of the services that Harambee provides. She suspects that this effort will increase the number of Special Education students and predicts that their numbers will be in the ninety's by the end of the school year. Board member Jan asked if they are looking at students that have gained from the support and may be ready to be declassified. Deleah explained that they are not looking to exit any students just yet because they need to have sufficient data to support exiting a student; and at this time they do not have sufficient data to exit anyone.

Business & Finance, Michelle Thornton

Greg turned the meeting over to Michelle for the Business and Finance report. Michelle reported that she would have three points to highlight this evening

- **Statement of Financial Interest**

Michelle reminded Board members that the statement of financial interest forms must be completed by members and are due by May 1st. She stated that they would follow a similar format as they did last year by sending an email to all of the Board members with a copy of the previous form that was completed and then schedule individual meetings to discuss changes. Michelle informed members that her department will make the necessary changes and updates on their end.

- **Budget Process for 2022-2023**

Michelle reported that their 2022-2023-budget cycle has begun. She informed members that she and Greg would be meeting tomorrow to develop their time lines. She reminded members that the budget must be voted upon thirty days prior to implementation, which would be June 1st. She indicated that they want to be sure that they are in compliance so they will have that vote in May. She also said that they will try to have that budget presented at the April Board meeting, so in March they will give it to their finance committee so that the committee will have it at least thirty days in advance. She stated that they will be working on it internally between now and March.

- **Twenty first century grant**

Michelle reported that the grant expired on December 31

st 2021. She stated that they were a part of cohort eight and now they have a new cohort eleven coming up, in which they have had a few webinars and planning meeting with the state. She reported that they are getting underway with completing the application for the new grant and expects that there will be some Board involvement. She stated that the Board will probably be reviewing the application, voting on it and signing off as supporters. Michelle informed members that they will use ESSER funds to bridge the gap until the funds are awarded from the new grant. Michelle opened the floor for questions regarding her report.

Dr. Baynard asked Michelle if it would be of any help to her, to have faculty from Drexel School of Education help with the data, and if so to let him know and he would put her in contact with those individual's. Greg informed members that this would conclude the reports for the evening and turned the floor back to Dr. Baynard. He asked for final questions or any other items to be discussed since there are no old or new business items.

Deleah announced that the Counseling Department and Special Education teachers are creating a Career Fair that is scheduled in May. She noted that she would be sending out information in March in case anyone has ideas that they would like to add. Greg also announced that Board members Jan and Monique have partnered with Twin Doc's and they will be kicking off a series of virtual workshops for students and their parents. They will begin in February and move through spring.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Motion: Board member Wade made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Board member Joseph. All were in favor, none were opposed.

Approval AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison February 16, 2022.

